

## Michigan National Guard soldiers offer employers a glimpse of training



*A National Guard soldier rides on the back of an open CH-47D Chinook helicopter on the return flight from the Boss Lift event in Grayling. A second Chinook follows in the distance. All members of the flight crew recently returned from active duty in Iraq.*

civil unrest. That is no longer the case. Nearly 65 percent of the state's National Guard soldiers have seen active duty and most of that action has been in Iraq. Currently more than 2300 Michigan National Guard soldiers are deployed.

This issue of *F.Y.J.* pays tribute to the men and women of the MDOC who are on the front lines fighting the global war on terrorism.

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Secure perimeters with their requisite security checks, weapons training, contraband searches and safety concerns are simply business as usual for the many corrections personnel who work in a facility or with parolees. DOC staff are highly trained to perform the duties required to maintain secure prisons and keep our communities safe.

However, hundreds of DOC personnel have taken their safety and security responsibilities to another level. They are the citizen soldiers of the Michigan National Guard and the U.S. Army Reserves who are currently on active duty. These volunteers have a new mission. They are working to keep the nation and the world safe.

While members of the National Guard have been called for active duty since the Vietnam conflict, the Guard has maintained a reputation as the troops whose only job is to respond to natural disasters or maintain order in the event of

They are also serving in Afghanistan, Kuwait, Kosovo, Bosnia and Guantanamo Bay Cuba. In addition many work with homeland security making sure our bridges and facilities are secure.

The Guard's role has always been to provide needed support to the full-time armed services but since September 11 that role has expanded. Immediately after September 11, National Guard soldiers were called to the Pentagon

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*From left: Major General Thomas Cutler, CFA Operations Manager Deb Scutt, Warden Blaine Lafler, Deputy Director Dennis Straub and Staff Sgt. Greg Garner.*

“It’s a way to thank employers for their support,” said Brigadier General Robert V. Taylor, Assistant Adjutant General.

According to National Guard Chief of Staff Colonel James R. Anderson, the goal of the program is to

and to bases in Washington, D.C. Many soldiers guarded U.S. bridges and airports.

For the National Guard to thrive and furnish the necessary troops, it is imperative that employers understand and support their employees who choose to serve in the part-time army. That is the thinking behind the successful Boss Lift program that each year transports employers to the Army National Guard training grounds in Grayling for a day of demonstrations and education.

## Role of the Michigan National Guard

The Army National Guard is the oldest component of the U.S. Army. Unique in the military, the National Guard has a dual role. It is charged to be trained and ready to help the nation’s full-time military—Army or Air Force—defend the country and fight the nation’s wars. The Guard also serves the citizens of Michigan directly in times of natural disasters, civil unrest, or more recently, to ensure the safety and security of key facilities, such as airports and border crossings.



*From left: Dale Baum, Agri Business Supt., Meat and Dairy Processing Plants, Parnall Correctional Facility (SMT); Tom Adler, Agri Business Assistant Supt. Meat Processing, SMT; and John Witte, Agri Business Equipment Operator, SMT, joined Sergeant Major Dan Lincoln, Agri Business Equipment Operator, SMT at the Boss Lift.*

provide visitors with a better understanding of the role of the Michigan Army National Guard in our nation’s defense.

The Boss Lift program originated in the mid 1980s. National Guard Captain Mark Gorzynski explained that the original intent of the program was for the guard member to bring his or her first line supervisor to annual training for a tour.

“These are the people who have to deal with the loss of staffing on a daily basis,” said Captain Gorzynski. “They have to fill the shifts and juggle the schedules.”

The event has evolved into an opportunity for the Guard to tell their story and gain employer support and understanding as well as heighten community awareness. It takes place each year during the Guard’s two-week annual training exercise.

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The CH-47D Chinook is a 1970 Vietnam-era helicopter. It is considered a medium lift cargo helicopter with twin turbine engines driving the twin rotors. With three external cargo hooks it is capable of carrying up to 26,000 lbs. externally. Internal loads are generally limited by size of contents. It is used for transporting troops and supplies.

Support Facility in Grand Ledge to Camp Grayling. They were joined by Sgt. William Burden and Lt. James Scott from Mid-Michigan Correctional Facility who were invited by C/O John Jansen. RPA James MacMeekin flew to Grayling from Chippewa County Airport in Sault Ste. Marie.

There were a number of deployed DOC staff training at Camp Grayling including a few who were too embedded in training to have the opportunity to meet with visitors.

During the camp tour, a live fire exercise provided a firsthand glimpse of some of the army's artillery capabilities.



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"These men and women have taken on a tremendous responsibility," said Deb Scutt, Operations Manager MDOC Correctional Facilities Administration. "It's important that we support them and their families."

This year Riverside Correctional Facility Sergeant Greg Garner, who has been deployed since September 17, 2001, invited Scutt to participate in the Boss Lift program. CFA Deputy Director Dennis Straub, St. Louis and Mid-Michigan correctional facilities Warden Blaine Lafler and *fyj* editor Gail Madziar joined her, flying in a CH-47D Chinook helicopter out of the Army Aviation



Warden Blaine Lafler (above) took time to examine the weapons while Deb Scutt (below left) took a tour of a rocket launcher.

An equipment display at the maneuver area training equipment site (MATES) showcased weapons, rocket launchers, a howitzer, tanks and troop transport vehicles.

Travel between venues was by bus or helicopter. A Black Hawk helicopter was on loan from a neighboring National Guard unit for the day since Michigan's Black Hawks are with troops serving in Iraq.

One of the most interesting components of the tour was a live Entry Control Point Exercise. Soldiers are trained to search vehicles entering and exiting a compound or city. The road is set up to simulate a checkpoint that would barricade a thoroughfare in Iraq or another

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*Earnest C. Brooks Correctional Facility teacher Tom Rossiter (left) explains the sand table to visitors and soldiers. He was responsible for building the elaborate model based on an actual entry control point training setup used by the Guard.*



*Joseph LaGrow, RUO, Macomb Correctional Facility and teacher Tom Rossiter take part in the training scenario.*

country. It is complete with gun towers, wire fence and areas for detainees.

In the training exercise, a truckload of contractors attempts to pass through the checkpoint. Troops stop and search the truck looking for a bomb or an IED (Improvised Explosive Device) or VBIED (Vehicle Born IED) or car bomb.

“They’re being trained to locate the IEDs which are homemade explosives,” explained Staff Sgt. Garner. “Insurgents will use old artillery rounds or whatever they can find to build a bomb and try and get it through the checkpoint.”

The activity gives the soldiers first hand experience of what to expect and training on how to react. This is especially



*A contractor's truck is searched during checkpoint training. Soldiers act as citizens and insurgents.*

important to the Guard since staffing the checkpoints is one of their duties in Iraq. The training scenarios are staged by veterans who have recently returned from Iraq and are an excellent opportunity for the soldiers to practice multiple attacks and complex situations.

A large sand table was constructed in conjunction with the exercise by deployed guardsman Tom Rossiter, a teacher at Brooks Correctional Facility. He designed and built a model of a checkpoint training scenario currently in use by the Guard. Sand table training is an aid that is often used to help determine a plan of action while in the field.

“The sand table allows them to paint a picture while using props to describe a mission visually,” said Captain Gorzynski.

While explaining the importance of the sand table, Sgt. Bradford Dillon, a deployed maintenance mechanic from Gus Harrison Correctional Facility, took the time to express his pride at the tremendous job his soldiers were doing and tried to get the visitors to appreciate the outstanding responsibility that the soldiers have taken on.

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*Soldiers work on the simulation trainer which takes them into the streets of Baghdad.*

Visitors were given a realistic view of how dangerous the mission of the Guard is when a bomb went undetected by the soldiers.

“It was an eye-opening experience to see what they are actually going to have to go through during their deployment,” said Deputy Director Straub. “I was impressed with the training and the skills that are required.”

The next stop was the simulation trainer. The trainer functioned like a giant video game played by more than a dozen participants at a time. Four vehicles, each staffed with a driver, a communications person and a soldier controlling a gun, had to make their way through the streets of Baghdad fighting off insurgents and avoiding bombs. The program was equipped with hundreds of possible scenarios using the actual streets of Baghdad.

## Camp Grayling

Camp Grayling, located in central northern Michigan, is the largest military installation east of the Mississippi River, and the nation’s largest National Guard training site. Year around training is conducted on its 147,000 acres by the National Guard, as well as active and reserve components of the Army, Navy, Air Force and Marine Corps.

## TRAINING

While basic training is the same for every soldier, there have been changes made recently to the annual training program.

“The training is being tailored to meet the war on terrorism,” said National Guard Public Information Officer Major Dawn Dancer. “It is theatre specific training.”

Since one of the Guard’s duties in Iraq is to staff the checkpoints, the scenarios are one example of the changes that are under-way.

“It’s now better suited to what the soldiers will actually face once they are there,” said Major Dancer.

The usual training plan is set by the army in one, three and five-year increments. Six months before this year’s annual training,

leadership decided to make a major change. They realized that the soldiers needed a new type of training.

“As we move away from the cold war to the global war on terrorism, the basics are still there to guide us but there have been some changes,” said Major Dancer. “This year rather than 10 days camping in the woods under the stars, the training took place in the cantonment area which is like a mini town complete with a chapel and medical station. The training focused on IEDs, insurgent attacks and convoy escorts. The training was mixed into whatever activity the soldiers were doing throughout the day to make it more realistic.”

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*RPA James MacMeekin takes a ride on a personnel transport.*

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*From left: Warden Lafler; Emmett Richardson, ITO, Thumb Correctional Facility; Deputy Director Straub; along with William Burden John Jansen (front) and James Scott all from St. Louis Correctional Facility get together on the steps of the Officers' Club.*

to serve one tour for each action.

"In general they are not called back [to active duty] for a minimum of a couple of years but that depends on the nation's need," said Major Dancer. "They may have served in Operation Iraqi Freedom and then be called up for Operation Enduring Freedom and go to Kosovo, Afghanistan, Bosnia or Guantanamo Bay."

"We have not had any units called up twice but we have had individuals go back," said Dancer.

One of those individuals is Staff Sgt. Greg Garner who has been deployed for nearly five years.

"My situation is unique. I work with our Military Support to Civil Authority Section which falls under the Governor's Homeland Security Advisors Office. We provide support and backup to local, state and federal agencies where ever we're needed," said Garner. "We have been involved in security for the MLB All Star Game and the upcoming Superbowl and our office assists with vulnerability assessments and security plans for critical infrastructure throughout Michigan. We also do the traditional disaster response type missions such as responding to the power blackouts and floods."

The guard's annual training this year also focused on convoy operation in and out of the front gates. The learning scenarios cover what to do if they get ambushed or one of their convoy is blown up.

In the past, signing up with the guard would usually involve one weekend a month and a two-week stint of annual training each year. Since the escalation of the war on terror, training has increased. That additional training means some soldiers go overseas or out of state.

Once guard members are deployed to active duty, they are no longer technically National Guard. At that time they become regular army and generally serve overseas for a minimum of 12 months. A typical tour could include five months of training before being shipped out, service in country (overseas) for 12 months and then another two to four weeks to out process before returning home.

"Once they are home and released from active duty army they have a two-month break," said Major Dancer. "Then they go back to their one weekend a month schedule with two weeks of annual training. However, after they have been deployed, they are excused from annual training for their first year back."

Typically, members of the guard are only called



*Deputy Director Straub views the artillery range through a site equipped with a laser.*

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Staff Sergeant Garner recently learned that he would be deployed to Kosovo for at least 12 months.

"I have gained a lot of knowledge and skills from the training and real world missions that I have been involved with while serving in the Michigan National Guard and I look forward to returning to the Department of Corrections after my deployment," added Garner.

All volunteers have the same three months of basic training as the active army. That involves fitness and firing a weapon. Then they move on to phase two or individual training.

"That's where they learn whatever job they are going to do. Those in artillery will go to artillery school, the Military Police will go to MP school," explained Dancer.

Managing the time off work can be a challenge for both employer and employee. Employers are bound by law to allow their employees to leave and have a job to come back to. State workers are compensated for any difference in their army pay and regular rate of pay. There are benefits for the employer.

"They bring back unique skills that the average civilian doesn't get," continued Dancer. "They learn so much about leadership and military preciseness."

The part-time soldiers also bring special skills to the military.

"Unlike our full-time counterparts we bring with us the outside civilian experience that active army never gets. The National Guard and reserves are out there every day in the communities," added Dancer.

That means there are additional challenges with lengthy deployments.

"There has been a huge difference in the length of deployment. The guard soldiers are supposed to be temporary fillers deployed for three to four months, but it hasn't happened this way," continued Dancer.

Guard soldiers have always been rotated in and out of bases regularly. However, Desert Storm was the first time in recent history that the Guard was called up in such large numbers.

It's a tough job. The soldiers have two jobs and two responsibilities, at home and in the army. Compounding the problem is the fact that the National Guard is not set up to take care of families the way a traditional army base would be. The families do not have the support system that is in place for full-time army. Those families can sometimes have two deployed parents.

Michigan follows the national average with approximately 14 percent of the Army National Guard consisting of female soldiers. The women go through the same basic training as their male counterparts.

"The only differences are in the physical standards," said Dancer. "Women are not required to run as fast or do as many pushups."

## **Fallen Hero**

**Corrections Officer Richard Goward from the St. Louis Correctional Facility was among the first soldiers in Iraq to make the ultimate sacrifice in the service of his country.**

**Army Spc. Goward was killed in a vehicle accident while serving in Iraq.**

**"Losing an officer affected the entire facility," said Warden Blaine Lafler. "First there was a feeling of disbelief. Then staff came together with an incredible outpouring of support for his family and they continue to hold an annual memorial golf outing."**

**The employees who make up the MDOC are often more than just co-workers. They count on one another for their safety every day and think of themselves as family.**

**"It was a hard loss for this tight knit group," said Warden Lafler. "Officer Goward was a dedicated officer."**

**C/O Goward was assigned to the Midland-based 1460th Transportation Company of the Michigan Army National Guard. He served on active duty with the Army from 1990 to 1996 and joined the Guard after the Sept. 11, 2001 terror attacks.**

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Training is not the only area experiencing change. The battle dress uniform, those green and brown camouflage suits that have been the army's signature for 20 years are slowly being phased out. The new uniforms, called ACUs or Army Combat Uniforms, sport a digital pattern of little squares of green, beige and brown. They are designed to work equally well in the woods or sand.

"It's lighter and very comfortable," said Dancer. "The transition is now in process and should take two to three years before the change is complete."

## RECRUITMENT

No one is denying that recruiting is tough right now.

"You don't have families sitting around the dinner table talking about their children's responsibility to serve America anymore," said Major Dancer.

Part of the shift is cultural. There are many opportunities after high school graduation that didn't exist 20 years ago.

"Over the past 10 to 20 years recruitment has been slowly declining," said Major Dancer. "There are so many options coming out of high school that people don't need the military. In many ways it's a natural decline."

Retention, however, is a different story. Soldiers appear to be re-enlisting at very high numbers. According to Dancer, Michigan is 15 in the nation for retention.

"Moral is extremely high right now," said Dancer. "This year at annual training the soldiers weren't complaining because they could see how important it is. Every one of them knows someone who has been deployed."

## SUPPORT

If you are looking for a way to show support for the troops consider a donation to the Michigan National Guard Family Fund. One hundred percent of this not-for-profit fund goes to financially struggling families of deployed Michigan National Guard members. Send your check or money order to Michigan National Guard Family Fund, 2500 S. Washington Ave., Lansing, MI 48913. For more information, call (517) 702-5116/5117.

You can also log on to the following Web sites:

☆ LOOK what kids are doing! at <http://www.kidexpressed.org/>

☆ America Supports You at <http://www.americasupportsyoudil/>

☆ Donate a calling card to help keep service members in touch with their families at Operation Uplink at <http://www.operationuplink.org>

☆ American Legion activities at <http://www.legion.org/support/index.php>

☆ Michigan Project Bluestar at [http://www.michigan.gov/homeland/0,1607,7-173-23612\\_34175\\_,00.html](http://www.michigan.gov/homeland/0,1607,7-173-23612_34175_,00.html)

☆ Send a greeting via e-mail through Operation Dear Abby at <http://anyservicemember.navy.mil/> or [www.OperationDearAbby.net](http://www.OperationDearAbby.net)

☆ Visit [www.defendamerica.mil](http://www.defendamerica.mil) to find out ways to support service members and their families throughout the year.

☆ Send a virtual thank you card at the Defend America Web site at <http://www.defendamerica.mil/nmam.html>

☆ Make a donation to one of the military relief societies: Army Emergency Relief at <http://www.aerhq.org/>

☆ Navy/Marine Relief Society at <http://www.nmcra.org/> ☆ Air Force Aid Society at <http://www.afas.org/>

☆ Coast Guard Mutual Assistance at <http://www.cgmaHQ.org/>

☆ Donate to "Operation USO Care Package" at <http://www.usometrodc.org/care.html>

☆ Support the American Red Cross Armed Forces Emergency Services at <http://www.redcross.org/services/afes/>

☆ [http://www.defendamerica.mil/support\\_troops.html](http://www.defendamerica.mil/support_troops.html) ☆ <http://www.usocares.org/home.htm> ☆ <http://www.army.mil/operations/iraq/faq.html>. 